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ABSTRACT

This synopsis of the gathering of healers and health providers presents a guide for discussion of rural Alaskan training issues. An introduction calls on Alaska's indigenous peoples to draw on their traditions and cultural values to create models for a healthy existence. The Health Education and Training Center (HETC) and its goals for improvement of rural health services and training are briefly described. The conference began with a Medicine Wheel exercise to unite participants, followed by a discussion of group behavioral norms for creating a positive productive atmosphere. Participants then brainstormed to identify 72 rural Alaska training issues, which were framed as questions to encourage discussion. The group prioritized 10 issues: promoting healthy family trainers and community leaders, creating healing workshops, designing cross-cultural training techniques, recognizing healthy empowerment in community development, expanding the circle of Native trainers, increasing trainers' mentoring potential, evaluating presentations for sexuality issues, developing sensitive and responsive institutional training techniques, delineating community expectations of trainers, and acknowledging cultural values related to the healing process. Small groups of participants then compiled recommendations related to the healthy family trainer, indigenous versus colonial world views, cross-cultural education, academic boundaries and use of the community's indigenous knowledge, sociopolitical knowledge necessary for healing, guidelines and basic prerequisites for community development, and contested interests within a societal context of unequal power relations. Comments of keynote speaker Don Coyhis and traditional healer Walter Austin are summarized. (SV)

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Alaska Center for Rural Health
Health Education & Training Center

NORTHERN ENLIGHTENMENT

A Sharing & Caring Gathering

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David Sam of the ACRH, Health Education & Training Center (HETC) Coordinator served as primary investigator for the report. Primary writing and reporting was done by Shelley Trainer. The HETC program is greatly appreciative to Melba Collett and Helen Baker for logistical and administrative assistance. Thanks to Samuel Simmons of Barrow, Gordon Pullar and Darlene Watchman of the Alaska Native Human Resource Development Project, and Theda New Breast-Ramos for their facilitation expertise.

Thanks to all the participants of the Northern Enlightenment gathering. Their care for the lives of all the peoples was apparent and very loving. At many gatherings of indigenous and rural residents, the trainers and other providers of behavioral health services have given so much of themselves. In good spirit, the indigenous and rural peoples have always responded and welcomed ideas and actions which look to the future generations' health and welfare. We give thanks for all these things.

The content of this report are reflections of the participants of the 1993 Northern Enlightenment gathering and are not necessarily the views, opinions or expressions of the ACRH, it's Board of Directors, funding sources or the University of Alaska.

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NORTHERN ENLIGHTENMENT:

A SHARING & CARING GATHERING

A discussion paper on rural Alaskan training issues

"One thing that I can say is that we, the Alaska Native People, are very capable of taking care of our own problems. That we <u>own</u> them. The answers are within ourselves."
——Dorothy Aloysius of Bethel, Alaska

The Health Education and Training Center (HETC), a component of the Alaska Center for Rural Health [formerly known as the Rural Alaska Health Education Center (RAHEC)] in partnership with the University of Alaska Fairbanks, facilitated the Northern Enlightenment Gathering at the Meier Lake Conference Center, Wasilla, Alaska April 7-9, 1993. This booklet is a synopsis of the gathering and is intended to be used as a guide for discussion.

The participants were health educators, providers, prevention specialists, behaviorists and other healers which continue to bring healing medicines to the people of Alaska. All persons shared a genuine concern for the larger community of the people of the north.

OUR GREATEST POWER IS THAT OF CHOICE

Beverly Hugo of Barrow, Alaska

We can slowly, methodically and in an organized way, define our own purposes through our traditional attitudes and beliefs which are built upon our own traditional customs, languages, and values. I felt that we did this during the Northern Enlightenment Gathering. This must be accomplished before we cease to exist as the people our creator meant for us to be.

We are taking on that responsibility and we must become the curriculum writers so that each and every culture will have their own cultural integrity and existence. As we move into the next century, the artistic and cultural visions of the many indigenous people of Alaska can help us to appreciate the dual tasks of preserving our historic and cultural values while building new traditions.

Our greatest power is that of choice. It's time for us to make choices and take back our destiny and our minds and our lives. I have this strong sense about those who envision restoration for their people for our people will have their restored sense of place.

The many indigenous peoples of Alaska have their own cultural values and standards, customs, traditions, and languages. Each have their own merit, beauty, and uniqueness as our creator has intended for us to be such a people. It's alright to be that people and nobody has the right to impose or oppress the indigenous peoples.

From our indigenous peoples we can develop models that first begin with our own traditional values, standards, customs, and languages. For the many indigenous cultures, health and education are intertwined as one. They are not separate or compartmentalized. For, there is a great desire for our children and people to know and to acquire knowledge of who we are and what our people stand for as our creator placed us on a certain distinct part of the earth and there we have co-existed and survived. The more pride we can take in ourselves and our descendants, the more we will have a healthier outlook on life.

This very important factor must be taken into consideration. Our ancestors co-existed and survived because they were the best hunters, environmentalists, craftsmen, seamstresses, parents, and grandparents. For thousands of years they looked after each other. Our cultural values, languages, customs, and traditions are still within our grasps. We can once again be healthy for we were once healthy and inter-dependent and we maintained and sustained ourselves within our cultural family units and our communities.

Edited by
Shelley Trainor
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

The Health Education and Training Center (HETC) is working together to bring about positive changes for communities and agencies in the behavioral health arena. The goals of the HETC are to:

- **Increase coordination of existing training resources** by increasing the knowledge of and participation in established paraprofessional training programs by individuals and agencies who are involved in rural mental health and substance abuse programs.
- **Facilitate improvement of training and services** by evaluating and improving existing paraprofessional and professional training programs to make them better suited to the unique health problems and cultural environments of rural Alaska.
- **Increase local participation of rural residents**, especially Alaska Natives, in the initiation and design of both training and direct service programs in behavioral health.
- **Emphasize prevention** through community designed, controlled and operated educational and cultural activities and mental health and substance abuse services.

The HETC advisory committee which planned, organized and facilitated the Northern Enlightenment: A Sharing & Caring Gathering:

Laurie Marum, Carolyn Winters, Joseph Ryan, Larry Roberts, Jones Wongittilin, Eva Sensmeier, Elizabeth Sunnyboy, Elizabeth Rose, Beverly Hugo

Walter Austin & Anna Frank (Not in picture)

The Rural Alaska Health Education Center (RAHEC) and it's parent organization, the Rural Alaska Health Professions Foundations, Inc. (RAHPF) are now known as the Alaska Center for Rural Health (ACRH). The foundation was established through the hard work of health educators, "consumers", administrators and health care providers to improve the distribution, supply, quantity, and efficiency of health care personnel serving all of rural Alaska. The mission has expanded since to include rural health policy development.

At the time of the Meier Lake gathering, the ACRH was guided by the following RAHPF Board Members:

(Back row) Margaret Wood, Gale Foode-Mighell, Jackie Phlaum, Joe Ryan, Karen Perdue, Tom Nighswander, Mark Gorman.

(Middle row) Bertha Jennings, Flora Sweetsir, Judith Snow-Rosander, Donna Galbreath

(Front row) Deborah Erickson, Beverly Hugo, Anna Frank, Eva Sensmeier

ACRH STAFF

Daniel A. Johnson. . . . . .Center Director
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David Sam. . . . . .HETC Coordinator
Dennis P. DeGross. . . . . .AORH Coordinator
Melba Collett . . . . . Administrative Assistant

Funding for this project was provided through cooperative agreement # U103/PE00013-01 with the University of Washington School of Medicine and the U.S. DHSS, Bureau of Health Professions, Multi-disciplinary Centers and Programs Branch, AHEC and special programs section.

THE PROCESS

On the morning of Wednesday April seventh, Samuel Simmonds of Barrow, Alaska began the gathering with a prayer. After the prayer, the Health Education Training Center Advisory Committee introduced themselves, welcomed the participants and each made their own introduction.

As with any holistic health conference (which must be healing in and of itself), the process is just as important as the materials generated. At this gathering, there were no ceremonies--*the gathering, (as life itself is) was a ceremony*.

As a humanizing process, Theda New Breast-Ramos, the primary facilitator, utilized one concept of the Medicine Wheel and asked each participant to speak to the whole group regarding their present place within the Medicine Wheel of Life. By asking each participant at the start of each morning to describe themselves: Where they were at *mentally, emotionally, physically* and *spiritually*--this exercise provided a focal point to bring the participants together. The Medicine Wheel concept utilized is pictured here.

GROUP NORMS

Theda New Breast-Ramos introduced the agenda and began by facilitating a discussion regarding idealized group norms. This is an important group activity as it sets the tone for the gathering.

- Check ego in at the door.
- Take care of self during the gathering. Get enough rest.
- Treat yourself and others with respect.
- Take it one day at a time.
- Ask for Creator guidance and for the Spirit to rule.
- Create support right from the start.
- Create safety for the whole group.
- Respect all personal boundaries on the healing journeys.
- Respect confidentiality. Bring holistic issues to the larger group.
- Validate others when they share.
- Create a positive atmosphere that is safe for all.

Be sensitive and responsive to what evolves.

Be adaptive to group changes.

Be honest.

- Encourage humor and laughter.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TRAINING ISSUES/QUESTIONS

After the Medicine Wheel exercise, establishing the norms, and informal discussions during a lunch break, the participants began a group Brainstorming Exercise to identify as many of the rural Alaska training issues as possible. The participants at the Northern Enlightenment Gathering expressed the following 72 training issues (which are) documented in their original consecutive order. They are divided into groups of four and the issues have been framed as questions to encourage small group discussion.

1) Have non-native teachers helped or hindered the indigenous peoples?

2) What are the indigenous peoples' teaching methods?

3) How do we make sure that more people experience training?

4) How can we best acknowledge the progress within a community?

* * * *

5) Why are there mostly men in the various types of treatment programs?

6) What are some ways to organize whole community workshops?

7) How do we empower natural healers?

8) How do we best develop our own healing interpretations?

* * * *

9) What are the prerequisites for community development?

10) What are the prerequisites for communication?

11) How do we bring back racial memory?

12) How do we bring back indigenous life skills to the people with our work?

13) What shall we do for the Year of the Indigenous Peoples?

14) How do we simplify what is really wrong with indigenous peoples?

15) How do we heal the stripped identities of indigenous peoples?

16) How shall we revitalize the strengths of the indigenous peoples?

• • • •

17) How do we promote courage of heart?

18) How shall we educate ourselves regarding "intent?"

19) What is the way to facilitate quality healing workshops?

20) How can we better document the physical aspects of anger and rage?

• • • •

21) How do we deal with the overwhelming number of issues?

22) Why are the elders left out of most processes for wellness?

23) How do we regain our identity?

24) How do we best abide by local protocol?

• • • •

25) How do we acknowledge family-based people and programs?

26) How do we become accountable?

27) What do we do about provider burnout?

28) How do we address sexual abuse in our communities?

• • • •

29) How do we develop support systems for sexual abuse occurrences?

30) How do we communicate with people who are seen as "spokesperson?"

31) What are the approaches for communicating with "spokespersons?"

32) How do we help people who are not well and are working as healers?

* * * *

33) How do we work with sexuality issues such as AIDS and pregnancy?

34) How can we encourage institutions to acknowledge native differences?

35) What are the ways to approach gender issues and power issues?

36) How can we make sure that we are current on information?

* * * *

37) How can we become more involved with curriculum development?

38) What are the dynamics of sexual abuse which are being covered up?

39) How do we match cultural values to assessment methods?

40) What are the institutional forms based upon westernization?

* * * *

41) What are the ways to improve our cross-cultural training techniques?

42) How do we improve our cross-cultural training assessments?

43) How shall we advocate indigenous views within any system?

44) How do we design culturally appropriate material?

* * * *

45) How do we best advocate for runaways and the homeless people?

46) How have colonial religions impacted our indigenous cultures?

47) What are the best ways to develop training's for parenting skills?

48) Is elder abuse a priority in our training agenda?

* * * *

49) How shall we address the loss of values in our training curriculum?

50) How do we show someone what to do without telling them?

51) What can we do to honor and celebrate the young people?

52) Do we have community involvement before we begin service projects?

* * * *

53) How do we become more aware of female and male norms?

54) Which values are working in today's society?

55) Which values are not working and have arisen out of trauma?

56) When is it appropriate to interject our principles and philosophy?

* * * *

57) Is it the trainer's role to bridge the gender gap?

58) What are the unresolved issues regarding interpersonal relationships?

59) What are the different definitions of "partnerships?"

60) How do we interpret non-traditional values to promote human balance?

* * * *

61) Does maintaining humility mean that we are teachable?

62) Are there good role models of men and women working in partnerships?

63) Are there role models of men and women battling federal, state, regional, local power structures?

64) What have we learned from present leadership programs?

* * * *

65) Do young people feel they are not needed?

66) What can we do to teach the young people how to help?

67) How can we best affirm grandparenting skills?

68) How can we certify Native trainers with Native criteria?

* * * *

69) How can we best advocate the healthy elders issues?

70) What can trainers do to support healthiness?

71) How shall we deal with gossip and jealousy among trainers?

72) What can we do to displace all forms and attitudes of racism, from the overt hateful to more subtle covert forms?

* * * *

"I remember
the strength of the common
bond of the people from
all points of Alaska."
——Priscilla Stella Peele of Sitka, Alaska

THE TOP TEN TRAINING ISSUES

From these 72 issues the whole group prioritized ten issues:

1) Promote healthy family trainers and community leaders to advance the healing process within families and communities.

2) Create enlightened healing workshops.

3) Design cross-cultural training techniques for each community.

4) Recognize all aspects of healthy empowerment in community development especially in regards to natural healers.

5) Expand the circle of Native trainers through recognition, promotion, and recruitment.

6) Increase the mentoring potential of trainers for a larger vision of healing.

7) Evaluate presentations for issues of sexuality such as pregnancy, domestic violence, age appropriate presentation, relevance of information, HIV/AIDS, and holistic wellness.

8) Develop training techniques for institutions regarding sensitivity and responsiveness.

9) Delineate community expectations of trainers related to values, ethics, moral principles, convention, and cooperation.

10) Acknowledge cultural values as the relate to the healing process and assessment techniques.

These ten points of reference formed the ideological basis for the Meier Lake gathering. This socio-political repositioning is the most important aspect of healing for Circumpolar Peoples and it is often termed "empowerment."

* * * *

A GROUP PROCESS MODEL

After the Top Ten Training Issues were identified, Theda New Breast-Ramos presented a useful model for exploring and expanding the top ten issues. The model is outlined here.

(1) Divide into groups with an equal number of participants.

(2) Discuss the issues/topics.

(3) Identify the cultural strengths.

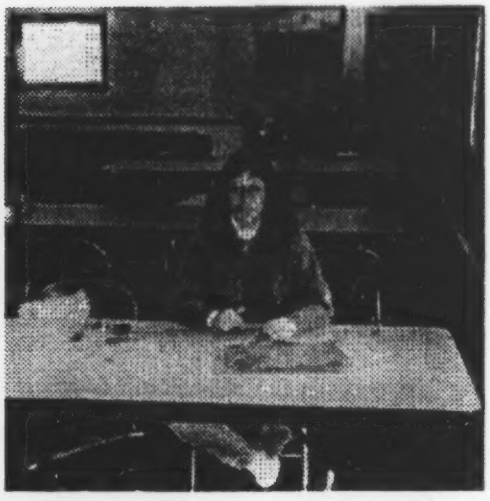
(4) Make recommendations/solutions.

(5) Prepare mini-summary.

(6) Present the issues/topics to the larger group.

(7) Facilitate a whole group dialogue.

(8) Record the recommendations/solutions.



"I really enjoyed the openness
the freedom to talk...
the freedom to share."
Sophie Anderson of Kenai, Alaska

THE GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

The participants had formed five groups. After the small group discussions they returned to the whole group format and recorded their recommendations on newsprint. The following description is a compilation of their recommendations.

First of all, "What is a *healthy* family trainer?" This is a community-respected person who is trustworthy and understands the importance of confidentiality. This person is interested in and sensitive to the community and is a person who comprehends the concept of "honesty." A healthy trainer, of course, "practices what is preached." This is a person who is ethical and free from alcohol and other harmful drugs. Such trainers have knowledge, wisdom and life-experience to share.

A healthy trainer/leader challenges and encourages healthy lifestyles. This trainer honors the community wherein the training occurs. One of the most important ways to honor others is to be a good listener, be sensitive and be responsive to the larger group's needs. Always take along your sense of humor. The healing of laughter is perhaps one of the most important strengths of the indigenous peoples, we never want to lose that. NOR do we give up, as the most repeated advice from our elders is "Don't give up."

WHAT IS A TRAINER IN ALASKA?

Louise Mayo of Cantwell, Alaska

A trainer is preferably indigenous to the area (an Alaska Native or American Indian) but not necessarily. It is preferable for the following reason. The villagers, at present, want to see their own people provide the training, particularly those whom they trust. Trust is important to establish before any training begins. For many years, the people in the villages of Alaska received visitors such as politicians, the missionaries, and other bureaucrats. Many made promises, but failed to keep them. It will take time and patience

for the villagers to develop the trust that is necessary so that the trainers can promote health skills for personal growth to help the villagers.

A trainer must have knowledge about a community. He or she must know about the language, beliefs, lifestyle, food, and the peoples specific needs. It is very important that the majority of the community are aware of the problem they must resolve and it is equally important that the people have requested assistance for the problem. Everyone in the community must be notified and invited.

* * * *

We must integrate our "heads and hearts" and to accomplish this, we respect ourselves and others. We are not to be "the sage on the stage but rather the guide on the side." Respect boundaries, know your skill level and your topic. This requires thoughtful planning of and presenting workshops with integrity. Some of the best ways to integrate our heads and hearts is to attend and be actively involved in traditional indigenous potlatch ceremonies, observe or take part in traditional dancing, singing, and drumming. This communal feasting and singing is very healing for all of the people.

Teach the traditional language. The cultural survival and healing for indigenous peoples resides, in part, in the indigenous language. The names of the healing plants. The equipment and preparation for whaling. The descriptions of the weather and the lives of the animals. All of these activities are environmentally specific for Athabascan, Aleut, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Yupik, and Inupiat. All of us have survived in our original homeland only because of the Peoples who went before us and studied all of the natural phenomena which surrounded them. In order for us to live well; and protect the plants, fish and animals around us for the children, it would be best for us to learn the culturally and environmentally specific languages. We will learn this best from our respected elders.

There are many ways for health educators and other medicine people to stay healthy and to support others. We can go to workshops, retreats, experience co-counseling, vacations, and learn about nutrition and the immune system. We can network by letter, conversation, telephone, and through prayer. Physical movement is known to increase healing energy and so all the varieties of exercise are a positive force in our lives. Various cultures have developed distinctive healing exercises. For example, yoga has been described as one of the greatest disciplines to increase both mental and physical flexibility. There are numerous and quite varied culturally specific forms of spiritual and educational activities which nurture our life-giving creativity.

There are many culturally specific training techniques which promote positive solutions for healing. Each individual has the choice to begin healing with self, family and community. This is best accomplished in a safe, confidential, validating, responsive environment. It is important to re-establish personal boundaries and establish a network of support. Use the tools that work for you and rekindle the extended family support systems and the life-event ceremonies which will help us to begin a lifelong, ongoing process of involvement within a healthier community.

The two most important criteria for successful process are:

- community involvement; and
- sensitivity and responsiveness to the various cultures.

This requires an ability to identify cultural strengths. Honor the nurturing of healthy grandparents. Remember that respected elders are our traditional teachers. All peoples sustain themselves with seasonal activities, traditional singing and dancing, special commemorative feasts, environmentally specific language, familial love, traditional foods, and growing circles of friendship.

The four most important criteria for implementing change are:

- healthy providers and organizations,
- an awareness of community development process,
- networking among health educators and medicine people, and
- the ability to facilitafe a process within a circle of people.

There are certain techniques which facilitate this process. Use local resources which may include the drum. Request advice from respected elders. Be consistent and clear as to the intent of information to be given. Know the material, plan well, remember the follow-up and closure. Have respect for all. Allow all to have a turn to speak, as in a Talking Circle. Remember that "give and take" is a process in itself and it is healing. Acknowledge, support and encourage the community's spiritual concepts and the peoples' ways.

The purpose of all of this sharing is to continue to expand the circle and to promote the creativity and health of all Peoples in Alaska and the Circumpolar Region. Caring trainers desire to empower the young people and all people to live and to live well and thoughtfully. For this we require Respect for our Hearts, our Minds, and our Bodies in equal measure.

• • • •

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

At one time, all of the indigenous peoples of the north shared a larger vision for their families, the earth, the animals, and the weather. Today, that vision is evolving and/or recreating itself as health educators and medicine people travel among their extended families and friends employing their best efforts to continue the weaving together of those positive life energies. Many of the indigenous survival skills have been damaged by the fatal impacts of cultural oppression. At the center of the shared vision is Respect and Thankfulness for the Worlds which surround us.

It is important for health educators and medicine people to recognize the source of some of the conflicting cross-cultural views between the indigenous and European colonizing people. Some of the most important distinctions are represented below.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CONFLICT WITH COLONIALS

INDIGENOUS	COLONIAL
The cosmos is living, conscious and communicating and therefore, all has a spiritual and sacred dimension.	The cosmos is mainly material with the living and the inanimate. Christianity is a belief of some and is often centered on a single, fearful Hebrew god.
Spirituality dominant in a timeless cosmos.	Man dominant during a limited time on earth.
Communal conservationist stewardship of land and ocean and river resources essential for survival of future generations.	Private ownership, commercial exploitation of indigenous peoples and their lands, wasteful consumption of indigenous resources and destruction, contamination, pollution, and desecration of lands and animals as the dominant way of life.
Communal sharing of resources based upon need.	Individual exploitation of others for individual gain based upon desire and greed
Family and communal affiliation paramount in all endeavors.	The individual as paramount.
Unwritten custom maintains order and assures sufficient livelihood.	Written laws by foreigners which has assured domination and exploitation of indigenous people and their environment

These six contrasting world views are among the basics of cross-cultural understanding for health providers and other medicine people who desire to work in Alaska.

CROSS CULTURAL EDUCATION

The University of Alaska statewide system has been endeavoring, with varying degrees of success, to be at the forefront for cross-cultural education in Alaska. The Alaska Rural Teacher Training Corps (ARTTC) was an early effort on the part of the university to begin to recognize and validate the cultural diversity. The intent of this program was for rural Alaska students (Athabascan, Aleut, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Yupik, and Inupiat) to receive educational degrees with course-work both on campus and in their home communities.

Another academic program which acknowledged the cultural diversity of students was the Rural Alaska Honors Institute for Athabascan, Aleut, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Yupik, and Inupiat high school students. And, the Della Keats Summer School was developed for students from the smaller communities who showed a special interest in healing medicines.

All of these early efforts in developing cross-cultural education within the University of Alaska statewide system became a source of guidance for the Rural Alaska Health Education Training Center (RAHEC) and contributed toward development for subsequent conferences such as the Northern Enlightenment Gathering.

The Northern Enlightenment Gathering brought together health educators, health providers and medicine people who wanted to expand their abilities in cross-cultural education and to continue to develop improved training techniques. This required a willingness to engage in open communication and to honor the cultural diversity of the Peoples of the Circumpolar Region.

The respect, the recognition of the language and cultural diversity of the indigenous peoples of Alaska is the most important indicator of effectiveness for health providers, educators and trainers within the smaller communities of Alaska. Every cultural group defines their social, political and cultural boundaries in a distinctive manner. Knowledge of these boundaries enables the medicine people to better work within a healing environment.

The issue of personal, community and indigenous boundaries is probably the most sensitive area which trainers must recognize and honor. The Rural Alaska Health Education Center functions within an academic setting within the University of Alaska and consequently there are certain questions which must be asked in order for trainers to be socially and politically informed. Ten important questions regarding academic boundaries are the following.

* * * *

TEN QUESTIONS REGARDING ACADEMIC BOUNDARIES

(1) What counts as knowledge?

(2) How is such knowledge produced?

(3) Do different groups in the community value different forms of knowledge?

(4) Are the different groups represented within the training?

(5) How is the knowledge transmitted within the training?

(6) Who has access to this knowledge and who determines the access?

(7) Whose interests does this knowledge serve?

(8) How do the assessment methods serve to legitimize existing forms of knowledge"

(9) Who sets the criteria for certification of the knowledge?

(10) Who updates the knowledge and with what criteria?

All of these questions are important as within an academic setting, and under the auspices of the University of Alaska, all transfer of knowledge has socio-political orientation. For trainers striving to become sensitized (and thereby be) more responsive to cross-cultural issues, these questions are vital. Every cultural group within Alaska will have their own culturally distinctive answers to these questions. This diversity is the greatest source of strength for the indigenous peoples of Alaska and the most important training issue for health educators and medicine people who work in Alaska.

* * * *

"People are our most important resource.
We may not necessarily motivate other people. At best,
what we can do
is to create an environment that will
allow the motivation of people,
which comes from within themselves,
to come out.
——Bea Shawanda of Lethbridge, Alberta - Canada

SOCIO-POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY FOR HEALING

Wherever the British, Spanish, and Russian flags were planted there began a disastrous series of events for indigenous peoples worldwide, many of which have had multi-generational consequences. This legacy of genocide, which included the introduction of many dis-eases, has been a source of the symptomatic dependency and illness which health educators and medicine people must continue to heal. Some of the historical and continuing losses in Alaska which health educators and medicine people attempt to heal are the following:

1. The tragedy of death by introduced disease and resultant poverty.

2. The trauma of the boarding schools and punitive schooling practices which divested many of their ancestral languages.

3. The loss of kinship boundaries and traditional relationships due to social disruption and shaming from colonial teachers and missionaries. This often included varying degrees of overt forms of physical, mental, spiritual and/or emotional abuse.

4. The sexual abuses from within the sphere of some church staff including Catholic priests and Protestant clergy.

5. The stress experienced for the forced incorporation of the indigenous peoples (i.e. for a quick fix for the oil industry.)

6. The continued harassment from law enforcement officials (such as those) who enforce the extinguishment clause of traditional hunting, fishing, and trading practices as stated in Section 4 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

7. The loss associated with an education system which does not recognize nor care to know the true social and political history of indigenous peoples.

8. The physical and sexual abuses from community leaders who, through their own lack of healing, continue their abuse from generation to generation.

9. The continued cover-up and fraud by indigenous leadership, who through their own fear and shame, act as apologists for the oppressive religions and governments.

10. The insidious "One People" concept of state government wherein distinct peoples are admonished to become as "One" formless indistinct entity.

These ten social and political issues reflect sources of trauma for indigenous peoples in Alaska. As a healing response the participants of the Northern Enlightenment Gathering made the following recommendations for healthy family and community development in Alaska.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1) Encourage community involvement.

2) Assist and Request support in the smaller communities.

3) Acknowledge the progress and strengths within the communities.

4) Achieve a family focus within the communities.

5) Introduce healing concepts and acknowledge the community's ownership of the concepts.

6) Support an international focus within "The Year of Indigenous Peoples."

7) Continue to voice or Bring back the cultural memories

8) Address the root causes of deprivation of human values within a historical context.

9) Deal with the problem versus its symptoms.

10) Ask whether the deprivation is internalized in the community or is it coming from an external source.

11) Promote a positive cultural revitalization for healing.

12) Recognize the educational policies which devalue the indigenous languages of Alaska.

13) Honor our respected elders.

14) Teach the survival skills of indigenous peoples.

15) Abide by the community protocol.

16) Address sexual abuse in the communities.

17) Acknowledge the healthy family-based people and programs.

18) Encourage the development of healthy trainers.

19) Acknowledge the power and control issues.

20) Learn the dynamics of sexual abuse.

21) Know the people, the land, and the culturally specific language.

22) Recognize the various spiritual and religious influences.

23) Develop culturally-specific parenting skills models.

24) Affirm healthy grandparenting skills.

25) Speak of racism and promote the healing of racist influence.

Each of the above twenty-five topic areas vary depending upon the cultural and community context and are listed here as a means to focus discussion. That these issues are specific to the indigenous peoples of Alaska is apparent.

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"Hard work and painful work were balanced with laughter. I heard some of the funniest jokes of my life."
——Susan Soule of Juneau, Alaska

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BASIC PREREQUISITES FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development and the facilitation of a a healthy learning environment are important challenges for trainers in Alaska. At the Northern Enlightenment Gathering the participants asked, "What are the basic prerequisites for community development and communication?" Here are some of the responses from the trainers.

- Know that people desire to belong.
- People desire to be respected and loved.
- Affirm and acknowledge people.
- People are important.
- Each person is a potential resource.

Beyond these basic prerequisites for community development and communication are the issues more directly associated with the Alaska of the 1990's. The indigenous peoples of Alaska share a common recent history with other indigenous peoples of the world. To fully address community development in a historical framework it is necessary to recognize contested interests within a cultural framework.

CONTESTED INTERESTS

There are certain contested interests within the societal context of unequal power-relations. These interests are on a continuum and vary from community to community. To recognize these contested interests is a basic requirement of becoming an enlightened cross-cultural trainer in Alaska. Six are presented here for discussion as they are at the root of a true understanding of cross-cultural education.

VIEW A	VIEW B
Non-Indigenous Culture, Language and Knowledge	Indigenous Culture, Language, and Knowledge
Acculturation and Assimilation	Validity and Legitimacy of Indigenous Knowledge
We are One People.	We are Athabascan, Aleut, Inupiat, Tlingit, Tsimshian, Haida, or Yupik.
Domination.	Survival as Peoples.
Maintain Status Quo.	Work for Change.
State Schooling.	Indigenous Knowledge.

These are six of the possible issues to consider when working with people whose lifestyle, language, and spirituality have evolved over thousands of years and are environmentally specific. To ignore these issues is to be a party to the emotional, mental, physical and spiritual violence against the indigenous peoples. To recognize these conflicting interests within a historical context is to be at the core of the societal issues; regarding either the oppression or the liberation of the indigenous peoples of Alaska.

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"We want to begin to honor Native leaders in healing and prevention education."
——Liz Sunnyboy of Bethel, Alaska

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KEYNOTE GUEST SPEAKER

Don Coyhis of Colorado Springs, Colorado

Don Coyhis of White Bison, Inc., Colorado Springs, Colorado, spoke to the Northern Enlightenment Gathering participants on day two. It has been said that we act characteristically of who we are and that our basic character is apparent to all, regardless of the words we speak.

In this vein, Coyhis shared these ideas. Knowing that we are all related and interconnected leads naturally to the notion of aligning our *spirit* and *intent*. This is an important principle for medicine people and other health educators. Aligning spirit and intent leads to clear concise messages. Our words, deeds and unvocalized intentions must be congruent and in mutual alignment. Productive, harmonious change requires this. People are very sensitive and know instinctively when a presentation is not well aligned. The alignment of spirit and intent is an important change agent.

For example, you can have the right words but others still know something is wrong. We always feel the intent of what is being said. When we function out of harmony with spirit and intent, others feel it because we are all connected. For example when one lies, when one really doesn't like another, when one thinks one is better than another, sometimes we can't prove it--BUT, we feel it. People of color, in particular women, are good at knowing when spirit and intent are out of alignment because it has happened so much to them.

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"Each person at the gathering was so evolved in their own growth that there was no need to evaluate trust."
-------Nick Gonzales of Nome, Alaska

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ON PROPHECY

Walter Austin originally from Tenakee Springs, Alaska

At the Meier Lake Conference, Walter Austin, of Tenakee Springs, Alaska, was honored as a traditional healer. During the conference Walter had suggested that the health educators and medicine people acknowledge the importance of prophecy in healing the people. Prophecy is a way of knowing and learning for indigenous peoples and for all peoples who have maintained their connection to the earth, the animals, and the weather.

It is obvious that institutional frameworks such as universities are essentially culturally antagonistic to many indigenous students, especially in regards to traditional teachings which include prophecy. However, institutional structures ought not to be taken for granted and the institutional structures which are restrictive to the indigenous peoples ought to be contested so that all of the ways of the indigenous peoples, including prophecy, can be included within the learning environment.

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In recent history the indigenous peoples have not been notified nor invited to a full participation of human rights within the framework of the Constitution of the United States. In this Year of Indigenous Peoples, institutions such as the University of Alaska *can* make a difference. For example, a true social and political history presented by the University of Alaska for the children living now (as well as for 10
those yet to come) of Athabascan, Aleut, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Yupik and Inupiat peoples would be an important part of the healing process for both the indigenous and non-indigenous population of the Circumpolar Region.

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"...(we must) investigate the effects of multi-generational cultural oppression, alcoholism, domestic violence, and family dysfunction as related to the status of Native American health today."

———United States Senate Community Based Mental Health Recommendations
United States Senate
Committee on Indian Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20510

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